

# THE MONTH OF HURRICANES

RECKLESS RALPH'S

## DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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### DID MOTTERN COMMIT MURDER FROM READING DIME NOVELS?

Improbable and Startling in Plot, Yet  
They Are a Guide to Conduct That  
Leads Away from the Electric Chair

Public Ledger Distinguished Writers  
Service

By BEATRICE BARRY

Copyright 1917 by Beatrice Barry  
(1-9-1917)

"You sent for me, and I have come,"  
said the celebrated detective.

The speaker was Nick Carter, and the ensuing pages described in detail the devilish ingenuity of the band of clever and desperate criminals whom he finally baffled and brought to justice.

A dime novel? "There ain't no such animal"—or so I was informed by a member of the publishing firm which has put upon the market many of the famous Nick Carter stories written by Alvert Tozer, whose recent death will leave a decided gap in the ranks of those writers who produce the particular type of fiction for which he was noted.

I do not mean, of course, that one cannot buy a novel for a dime. On the contrary, the same gentleman who informed me that the dime novel had perished from the earth stated that the annual output of his firm approximated five million books, virtually all dime novels as regards price; but these cheap editions include such standard works as those of Dickens and Thackeray, as well as the Nick

Carter novels and even a superior type of detective story, such as the works of Conan Doyle.

The dime novel, as most people understand the term, means a highly colored and sensational type of fiction issued in pamphlet form, and treating of Indians, cowboys, train robbers and "bad men," who rage through its pages in a series of glaringly improbable and startling adventures. The plot of one which I read years ago has faded from my mind, but I still remember that thrilling moment when the bold bandits, having captured the detective who had traced them to their lair, were torturing him by way of revenge. He was strung up by the thumbs, and the description of his agonies was horrifying complete.

At this crucial moment along came the Boy Sleuth! He was only sixteen years old, but his detective ability was infinitely superior to that of older men who had spent their lives at the business. The bandits themselves, steeped in a lifetime of ingenious crime, were no match for his resourcefulness. He peered into the cave where the torturing process was in progress. Crack! Crack! went his trusty revolver, and the cords by which the hapless victim was suspended were snapped. The next shot put out the lamp, and the captive, aided by the Boy Sleuth, promptly made his escape.

That incident fairly represents the style of story turned out years ago in large quantities for youthful consumption by such writers as Ingraham, E. C. Z. Judson, Sylvanus Cobb and many others. Apparently it has

been replaced by the Nick Carter brand of novel—not a dime novel in the former sense of the word at all—oh, no, the publisher told me so! Nevertheless, it contains all the old thrills, the tense situations, the clever criminals, who are invariably outwitted and punished through the instrumentality of the more clever sleuths; but it is somewhat less crudely constructed than the old dime or nickel pamphlet. All stories of this type have incurred much severe condemnation from those who believe that their effect upon the youthful mind is most injurious. Is it?

"They deal," one gentleman stated, "with the impossible, and give the young reader an utterly false idea of life."

So do fairy tales, in which most of us once believed implicitly, as we did in the Santa Claus myth—and shall we banish them from the nursery?

"Their worst fault," says another critic, "lies in their tendency to rouse in the youthful reader a desire to emulate the impossible exploits of the hero."

But the hero, while he is always a dare-devil, taking great risks and exhibiting wonderful personal bravery and unexampled presence of mind, is invariably law-abiding and generally busily engaged throughout the entire story in the suppression of crime. Could any story which systematically upholds virtue and condemns vice, showing always how surely the latter does not pay, exert any very harmful influence? Even the old style of dime novel did that. The beautiful heroine was always rescued, the wicked villain received his just desserts and the brave hero was exalted. Such a moral is not always pointed by those who write stories, which, considered from a purely literary standpoint, are of a much higher order. Take "Raffles," a detective story which glorifies the criminal, making him so clever and engaging that he quite wins the sympathy of the reader in all his illegal operations. That is the idea of an immoral story with a possibly pernicious influence. Yet who would dream of banishing the entertaining rascal from the book shelf?

Whatever influence is or has been exerted by the dime novel, it has undoubtedly been lessened and to a degree supplanted by the movie films

which portray a certain lurid class of melodrama. It is much more exciting to see the base villain and the brave hero at work than to read about them, and the small boy in search of thrills, as all boys are at a certain stage of their development, will probably frequent the movie houses where crime and detective films are featured, if he does not read "The Coin Cuff Button," "Just Like the James Boys," "The Train Robbers," "The Cigar Thieves," all Nick Carter stories, and others of that ilk. He may do both. And he might do worse.

Interest and conjecture regarding the influence of the dime novel as an incentive to juvenile crime have been revived by the statement of Henry Ward Mottern, aged seventeen, now under sentence of death in Pennsylvania for complicity in murder, that one copy of Jesse James and one copy of Wild Bill comprised the only fiction he had ever read. He says he killed Haines the elder and helped to rob him because he and young Haines wanted money to go West and be cowboys. Unless the pardon board acts, he will die this month. "The direct result of reading dime novels," their enemies will cry triumphantly. But is it?

Young Mottern did not murder and steal because dime novels had developed in him a desire to do either. The dime novels, to be sure, were responsible for his desire to become a cowboy, but natural depravity, as the evidence shows, producing crooked mental process of a very low order of intelligence, and the hopeless handicap of heredity, environment and lack of educational opportunities operated to make him resort instinctively to illegal and immoral means to secure the money needed for the realization of his otherwise perfectly legitimate however romantic and impossible, ambition. If the boy had really used his dime novels as a guide to conduct, they would have taught him that the course he adopted could not fail to land him just where he went—to jail and under sentence of death. That's what always happens to the dime novel criminal unless he dies fighting.

If Mottern had never seen a dime novel in his life he would doubtless have taken the crooked path to the attainment of any object. Many boys have been fired with ambition to be-



come cowboys. No normal boy was ever prompted to murder as a means to that end, no matter how many dime novels he had read. This boy is not normal and would appear to be a fit subject for medical treatment, not for the electric chair, from which it is devoutly to be hoped that he will be saved. As a case against the dime novel, his testimony is therefore unconvincing.

## OVER MY SHOULDER

By One of the Members

Just a word of caution to the members of the Happy Hours Brotherhood.

We are joined together to help each other and thereby help ourselves. We are doing neither when we let outsiders read our copies of the ROUNDUP, not for the purpose of becoming interested and later joining, but just to find out the names and addresses of those who have novels to trade or sell or who wish to buy.

Recently we had a chap, who is not a member and who seems to have no intention of joining, get names and addresses from the ROUNDUP of a legitimate member, write these members and thereby have his literature come into the hands of live prospects, without contributing a nickle to the cost of publishing the ROUNDUP. He could have saved much time and worry by putting a full-page ad in the ROUNDUP and thereby helping us to continue in existence.

In addition to the above practice, we have our jackals who have access to the ROUNDUP, but who cannot join because they are mail thieves. They answer ads of those who want rare items, claiming to have them in "perfect shape" and quoting prices. The prospect sends his money in good faith and the jackal pockets it and chuckles. Or, he may offer to purchase a fine lot and offers a fat price for it, "if he can see the books and they prove satisfactory." The would-be seller, sends the lot and never sees the books again, while the jackal chuckles again and sells them for a fancy price to those who are searching for rare items.

Brothers, when you read your copy of the ROUNDUP, it is well not to let some one look over your shoulder.

## ODDS AND ENDS

By W. B. McCafferty

"The Brady's and Maiden Lane." That's the way my "Odds and Ends" items started in the last number of the ROUNDUP.

Well, here is more about that famous old street.

Maiden Lane follows an irregular course from Broadway to the East River. A stream once flowed where the street is now, and Dutch housewives washed their clothes in its waters. In those early days of New York's history—in the days of the Dutch of Manhattan, a path ran beside the stream called "T Maagde Paatje." The street was never called Maiden Lane until after the British occupation. On the north side of the Lane was the farm of Cornelius Van Tienhoven, the secretary of the Dutch Colony. Slowly but surely the Lane attained the dignity of a full-fledged street. In 1716 a lot on the northwest corner of Maiden Lane and Williams street was sold for one hundred, thirty-eight dollars. Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, lived at No. 57 Maiden Lane in the days when the seat of government was in New York. Near him, at No. 59, was the home of one of the Clerks in Chancery. Fred. G. Orphal of Brooklyn, N. Y., tells me that there is a Maiden Lane in my own home town, Ft. Worth, Texas (commonly called "Cow Town" in these parts). Isn't it strange that one has to get information about his own town in such far away points like New York and Brooklyn. I was born and reared in Ft. Worth, and if there is a Maiden Lane in the city, I've never seen it. But it's there, because Mr. Orphal could not be mistaken, since he got his information from a Postal Street Directory of 1908, published in Washington, D. C. Incidentally I might say that Mr. Orphal informs me that he got his first office boy job in Maiden Lane—the one in New York, not Ft. Worth. I am sure the Brady's never saw Maiden Lane in Ft. Worth, notwithstanding the fact that they did visit Texas in the days of the great Spindletop oil discovery in the Beaumont Field in the early 1900's. Maiden Lane in Ft. Worth is a far cry from Maiden Lane in New York City.

Going through old papers I have

just run across an article by Lon R. Stansberry in the Daily Oklahoman of December 30, 1936, which tells of the gun battle at Ingalls in the old Indian Territory, which occurred in 1893. Those who featured in this fight were Bill Dalton, brother to Emmet Dalton, Bill Doolin, Arkansas Tom Jones, George Newcomb, known as Dynamite Dick, Tulsa Jack, Bitter Creek Bob Yokum, Slaughter Kid Dan Clifton, on one side and Red Lucas, and Bob Andrews and others of the law on the other side. The officers camped on the banks of a creek in a covered wagon to hide the fact that they were officers after the Doolin-Dalton gang. They played in with them in poker games, etc., to find out all they could about them before closing in. They worked several ruses before the showdown, which would take too long to relate here. A youngster overheard the officers planning how they should capture the gang, and told the outlaws that "the marshals are coming." Bitter Creek Bob left the poker game and went to a well for a drink; an officer, Dick Speed, opened fire on him, damaging the outlaw's gun. Then the big battle was on, and raged furiously for a few minutes. Speed was killed by Arkansas Tom. Jerry Simmonds, a 14 year old bystander was accidentally killed in the fight; and a citizen was also killed. Tom Houston, an officer, was killed by Arkansas Tom. In trying to get away, Dalton's horse was shot twice and died later by a bullet from Dalton's gun to put him out of misery. Dalton got some wire cutters from the saddle bags and cut a wire fence so the outlaw band could escape, leaving two citizens and three officers dead and one outlaw wounded. Arkansas Tom, who had not gotten away with the gang was cornered in the hotel, and finally surrendered on condition that they would take him to Guthrie and get him a fair trial. He was given 50 years in prison; served a long term, but was finally pardoned and went to live in California where he, like Emmet Dalton, made a good citizen. In later years, according to the Stansberry article, he played his own part in the movie, "The Oklahoma Outlaws." He and Emmet Dalton are the only two outlaws who ever lived to take part (after their reformation) in a picture and actually portray the parts they

had lived.

When the outlaw band ran from the officers the big hunt was on. In order to make it hard for the officers to find them, they separated. Dalton went away alone, and made the mistake of going to see his family soon after the Ingalls fight. The officers came to his place; he started for the barn for his horse and was shot and killed, which ended the career of the Dalton brothers as outlaws. Of the nine Daltons, sons of Louis Dalton and his wife, three were killed as outlaws, one as a United States officer fighting whiskey runners; one served several years in prison and was pardoned, making a splendid citizen. Doolin was captured in Hot Springs by Bill Tilghman, who, in a disguise, was on his trail. He was jailed at Guthrie, but escaped, and started to Mexico with his family, on which trip he was surprised by Heck Thomas and a group of officers, and killed by two loads of buckshot from Thomas's gun. While he was a lawbreaker, he nevertheless tried to keep others from going wrong. He said he was in it too far to go straight, but warned others not to follow the path of outlawry. The rest of the band were finally killed, except Dynamite Dick, who escaped from officers in a running battle and was never heard of again.

The Post Office Department will issue a new commemorative in August, honoring the Grand Army of the Republic (the GAR). This will call to mind of the readers of the old stories many names that have figured in the stories, not the least of which is the name of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was not ashamed to be known as a reader of the dime novels of his day, and professed to get pleasure from such reading. Another name associated with those times is that of General George A. Custer, of the celebrated "Last Stand," who also has been featured in the old tales. "The Western Stamp Collector" of Albany, Oregon, prints the following about Custer:

"Among the first of the Civil War military units to disappear from reunions was Custer's Cavalry. Its leader, a hero of Gettysburg, George Armstrong Custer, friend of Gen. Phil (Winchester) Sheridan and fated to give his life in the massacre of the Little Big Horn, had been a cynosure of Washington eyes because of his



long golden hair and individualistic military dress....the men who fought under Custer wore bright red neckerchiefs tied in sailor's knots, and ...cheers were plentiful when they passed in review."

According to an article in the *Coronet* magazine, it was Crazy Horse, not Sitting Bull that "outsmarted, outgeneraled, and outfought Custer in 1876. Crazy Horse first came to notice at the battle of Ft. Phil Kearney, where the fierce and skillful fighting of the 21 year old Sioux under Chief Red Cloud brought him to notice. This was two years before the battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana. The Battle of Wagon Box taught Crazy Horse the superiority of Springfield rifle over bows and arrows. He resolved that such should be his weapons thereafter. The government sent an ultimatum for the Indians to get back onto the reservation by January the first. Because of the severe cold Crazy Horse refused to leave his encampment. He thought the weather too severe for the women and children, for the weather was below zero. Colonel Reynolds, according to the magazine, was sent to destroy the village on the Powder River, which he did, but was severely handled by the warriors of Crazy Horse. He retreated, leaving the dead and wounded in the hands of the Indians, and was accordingly court-martialed for this action. General Crook was then sent on May 26, with thirteen hundred troopers, against Crazy Horse, but was worsted at the battle of Rosebud on the seventeenth of that month. Custer was at this time camped on the Yellowstone. Custer was to be joined by Crook, who failed to move, while Crazy Horse, joined by six tribes waiting in the valley of the Little Big Horn, moved against Custer. (The article speaks disparagingly of Custer's prowess and ability, stating that he failed to make proper reconnaissance, and with tired horses and weary men, went blindly into battle in the Black Kettle fight on the Oklahoma Washita). Crazy Horse had learned much about war, and observed that the troopers would dismount while one man held the horses and the others would shoot. Crazy Horse had his warriors carry lariats, which they tied to their own horses, leaving them at a distance of thirty feet, they then shot the men

holding horses in Custer's army. In the smoke of battle the Indians hid in the brush and still held their horses by the long lariats. From these places of hiding they shot the men holding the horses of Custer's command, and stampeded them; the animals taking with them the extra ammunition. Thus victory was snatched from Custer and he was killed in the massacre. This aroused the nation, and Crazy Horse was hunted more fiercely. The Indians were scattered. Sitting Bull went to Canada, Crazy Horse surrendered for the sake of the women and children, with the promise of immunity. There was strong sentiment against him, as the man who killed Custer. Trying to get medicine for his young bride, he went over the reservation line. He was arrested, and at the jail resisted, and was killed.

## NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

Guy McIntyre, Box 17, Farmland, Ind., wants books on when gold was discovered in California.

Special Handling. A bookseller reports that there is widespread misunderstanding of the special handling charge (20c) on parcel post. For this fee the parcel is handled like first-class mail and thereby delivered much more promptly. When the extra 20c is enclosed, with an order, it is further observed, parcels should be appropriately marked and stamped for this service.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Wakefield visited with the Don Learnards Aug. 21st.

The Fighting Man, by Frank Gruber, is on the James Boys, Youngers, Quantrel, etc.

J. Edward Leithead wants Ace-High Magazine, second Nov. number 1927, for his collection. Feature story on cover is "Hair Trigger Law," by Wilton L. Covert.

Ed. Smeltzer wants any old novel that has this address stamped inside—Smiths Old Book Store, 262 Susquehanna Ave., Phila., Pa. Billy Smith sold all kinds of old novels in the early 1900's, and later.

Charles Duprez says the Little Herman program, that comes over the radio, is a dead steal on the Bowery Boy Library.

Clarence E. Miles, Vinalhaven, Me.,

says he knew the widow of Texas Jack (Omahundo) near Lowell Mass. Clarence is a Golden Days fan.

George Flaum had his set of Tip Top Weekly bound by The National Library Bindery Co., Atlanta, Ga. and he says they did a fine job. Georges Tip Tops are all in fine A1 condition.

The Danites of New York, A Thrilling Detective Story of the Great Metropolis, by W. F. Mott, a serial, appeared in Saturday Night, Vol. 22, No. 42, June 30th 1885.

L. S. Seidman had a fine 2 page spread of 5c novels in the N. Y. Sunday News, Aug. 14th, called "In the Nick of Time." Pictures of Pluck & Luck, Work & Win and others, showing timely rescues of all kinds.

How about some one doing an article on famous horses that appeared in novels, such as Dick Turpin's horse, Black Bess, Young Wild West's horse, Spitfire, and others?

Fritz Moore, Manhattan, Kansas, wants a book titled "The Trail of the Seneca," by Braden, also others by same author.

Wallace H. Waldrop is thinking very strongly, of getting up a few petitions of names of the brothers, to try get the old dime and nickel novels started again, so let's all offer to sign his petitions, so as to help get the old timers in print again.

The Palumpest, June, 1949, Vol. 20, No. 6, has 3 fine articles and 4 pages of pictures, on the old Dime Novels, Beadles, on Iowa dime novels, such as "Collecting Dime Novels," by T. Henry Foster, our new H. H. Bro. Member #202. "The Beadles and Their Novels," by Frank Luther Mott. "Pioneer Iowa in Beadle Fiction," by Vera I. Marr. All fine articles, and worthy of any ones collection. Send 10c to The State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

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PLEASE report new addresses promptly, as the ROUNDUP is usually not forwarded by the post office department and you may miss one or more issues if your new address isn't sent in.

FASCINATING ILLUSTRATED catalogs of dime novel thrillers FREE. Send me list of the kind you particularly like, so I can send you lists of your favorites I have for sale or swap.

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